

Message Text

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12

ACTION DHA-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 ORM-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /027 W
----- 053726

R 100716Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6147

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJ: REFUGEE BOAT CASES

REF: A. STATE 220624; B. SINGAPORE 4190

1. IN RESPONSE REF (A) INSTRUCTION, EMBASSY INFORMATION OFFICER CONTACTED UPI BUREAU CHIEF JOE GALLOWAY WHO THEN DID STORY ON RECENT ARRIVAL OF 33 REFUGEES ABOARD "W.A. MATHER" (REF. B). ALSO GAVE HIM, ON BACKGROUND, DETAILS ON ALL BOAT CASES IN SINGAPORE DURING LAST SIX MONTHS. POINTED OUT HUMAN TRAGEDY AND PLIGHT OF REFUGEES, PROBLEMS FACING CAPTAINS, AGENTS AND OWNERS OF SHIPS WHICH PICKED THEM UP AND HOW GOVERNMENTS OF THE REGION AND UNHCR ARE HANDLING THESE CASES.

2. GALLOWAY SAID THAT UPI PLANNED SIMILAR REGIONAL STORY SEVERAL MONTHS AGO BUT DROPPED IT WHEN UNNAMED PHILIPPINES OFFICIAL TOLD UPI CORRESPONDENT IN MANILA THAT IF CONTINUED ARRIVAL AND PRESENCE OF REFUGEES WERE PUBLICISED, THE PHILIPPINES WOULD COMPLETELY SHUT THE DOOR ON THE REFUGEES. HE WILL MOST LIKELY LEAVE PHILIPPINES OUT OF WRAPUP WHICH HE PLANS IN NEAR FUTURE. HE OR STRINGERS MAY CONTACT JAKARTA OR KUALA LUMPUR EMBASSIES

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

3. ALSO CONTACTED ASIAN WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORTER GENE CARLSON NOW IN SINGAPORE. DUE TO POSSIBLE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF STORY, HE HAS ASKED JOURNAL'S HOME OFFICE IN HONG KONG FOR GUIDANCE. AMCONGEN IN HONG KONG MAY WANT TO PURSUE WITH JOURNAL'S EDITORS THERE.

4. PLAN TO CONTACT OTHER JOURNALISTS AS OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF AND NEW BOAT CASES SURFACE, BUT WILL DO SO IN LOW KEY MANNER TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF PUSHING PRESS CAMPAIGN. STORY IN SEPT 13 NEWSWEEK INTERNATIONAL EDITION WILL PROBABLY ALSO GENERATE INTEREST IN BOAT CASES. GRANT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, SEA RESCUES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SINGAP04223
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760342-0041
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760972/aaaacjqe.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION DHA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 220624, 76 SINGAPORE 4190
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REFUGEE BOAT CASES
TAGS: SREF, EWWT, SN, VS, XC
To: STATE BANGKOK
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006